

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for receiving payment for postage for a parcel by a delivery system operator from a customer, comprising:
 - receiving payment from the customer for a first postage value;
 - receiving the parcel for delivery, the parcel including a machine-readable postage indicia indicating the amount of the received payment;
 - determining parcel attributes;
 - calculating a determined postage value for the parcel based on the determined parcel attributes;
 - determining the first postage value from the indicia; and
 - transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount based on a comparison between the first postage value and the determined postage value.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the payment is received from the customer over a network.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the payment is received by the delivery system operator over the Internet.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the machine-readable postage indicia is one of a bar code and an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

requesting additional payment when the determined postage value is greater than the first postage value.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

generating a credit when the determined postage value is less than the first postage value.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the parcel is at least one of the following: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount comprises transmitting data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.

9. A system for receiving payment for postage for a parcel by a delivery system operator from a customer, comprising:

a payment receiving component to receive payment from the customer for a first postage value;

a parcel receiving component to receive the parcel for delivery, the parcel including a machine-readable postage indicia indicating the amount of the received payment;

a parcel determining component to determine parcel attributes;

a calculating component to calculate a determined postage value for the parcel based on the determined parcel attributes;

a postage determining component to determine the first postage value from the indicia; and

a transmitting component to transmit a postage payment adjustment amount based on a comparison between the first postage value and the determined postage value.

10. The system of claim 9 wherein the payment receiving component receives payment from the customer over a network.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein the payment receiving component receives payment by the delivery system operator over the Internet.

12. The system of claim 9 wherein the machine-readable postage indicia is one of a bar code and an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made.

13. The system of claim 9 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

a requesting component to request additional payment when the determined postage value is greater than the first postage value.

14. The system of claim 9 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

a generating component to generate a credit when the determined postage value is less than the first postage value.

15. The system of claim 9 wherein the parcel is at least one of the following: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

16. The system of claim 9 wherein the transmitting component to transmit a postage payment adjustment amount comprises transmitting data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, Internet, and an interactive voice response system.

17. A system for receiving payment for postage for a parcel by a delivery system operator from a customer, comprising:

means for receiving payment from the customer for a first postage value;

means for receiving the parcel for delivery, the parcel including a machine-readable postage indicia indicating the amount of the received payment;

means for determining parcel attributes;

means for calculating a determined postage value for the parcel based on the determined parcel attributes;

means for determining the first postage value from the indicia; and

means for transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount based on a comparison between the first postage value and the determined postage value.

18. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for receiving payment is from the customer over a network.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the means for receiving payment is by the delivery system operator over the Internet.

20. The system of claim 17 wherein the machine-readable postage indicia is one of a bar code and an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made.

21. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for adjusting the payment further comprises:

means for requesting additional payment when the determined postage value is greater than the first postage value.

22. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for adjusting the payment further comprises:

means for generating a credit when the determined postage value is less than the first postage value.

23. The system of claim 17 wherein the parcel is at least one of the following: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

24. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount comprises transmitting data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, Internet, and an interactive voice response system.

25. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system to perform a method for receiving payment for postage for a parcel by a delivery system operator from a customer, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving payment from the customer for a first postage value;

receiving the parcel for delivery, the parcel including a machine-readable postage indicia indicating the amount of the received payment;

determining parcel attributes;

calculating a determined postage value for the parcel based on the determined parcel attributes;

determining the first postage value from the indicia; and

transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount based on a comparison between the first postage value and the determined postage value.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 wherein the payment is received from the customer over a network.

27. The computer-readable medium of claim 26 wherein the payment is received by the delivery system operator over the Internet.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 wherein the machine-readable postage indicia is one of a bar code and an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

requesting additional payment when the determined postage value is greater than the first postage value.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

generating a credit when the determined postage value is less than the first postage value.

31. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 wherein the parcel is at least one of the following: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 wherein transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount comprises transmitting data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, Internet, and an interactive voice response system.

33. A method for receiving payment for postage by a delivery system operator from a customer, comprising:

receiving from the customer mailing information for a parcel, the mailing information comprising customer-determined attributes of the parcel;

calculating a first postage value based on the customer-determined attributes;

transmitting data to the customer to permit printing by the customer of a mailing label for the parcel, the mailing label including an indication of the first postage value;

charging a customer account for the first postage value;

determining attributes of the parcel by the delivery system operator;

calculating a second postage value for the parcel based on the operator-determined attributes; and

transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount to the customer account based on a comparison between the first and second postage values.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein the mailing information is received from the customer over a network.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein the mailing information is received by the delivery system operator over the Internet.

36. The method of claim 33 wherein the customer-determined attributes include at least one of height, length, weight, thickness, and weight of the parcel.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

38. The method of claim 33 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

39. The method of claim 33 further comprising storing the mailing information.

40. The method of claim 33 wherein the customer account is a credit card account.

41. The method of claim 33 wherein the mailing label further comprises a unique identification code for the parcel.

42. The method of claim 33 wherein obtaining operator-determined attributes comprises at least one of weighing the parcel, capturing an image of the parcel, and sensing physical dimensions of the parcel.

43. The method of claim 33 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

requesting additional payment when the second postage value is greater than the first postage value.

44. The method of claim 33 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

generating a credit when the second postage value is less than the first postage value.

45. The method of claim 33 wherein the indication of the first postage value is at least one of a bar code, an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made, and a postage stamp.

46. The method of claim 33 wherein the parcel is at least one of the following: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal

Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

47. The method of claim 33 wherein transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount comprises transmitting data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.

48. A method for correcting a postage value, comprising:
storing a first postage value derived from customer-determined attributes of a parcel;

receiving payment for the first postage value;

receiving the parcel at a delivery system operator;

determining attributes of the parcel by the delivery system operator to generate a second postage value;

comparing the first and second postage values; and

if the first postage value is greater then the second postage value, providing a credit to the customer; and

if the second postage value is less then the first postage value, generating a charge to the customer.

49. A system for receiving payment for postage by a delivery service operator from a customer, comprising:

a first component to receive from the customer mailing information for a parcel, the mailing information comprising customer-determined attributes of the parcel;

a second component to calculate a first postage value based on the customer-determined attributes;

a third component to transmit data to the customer to permit printing by the customer of a mailing label for the parcel, the mailing label including an indication of the first postage value;

a fourth component to charge a customer account for the first postage value;

a fifth component to determine attributes of the parcel by the delivery system operator;

a sixth component to calculate a second postage value for the parcel based on the operator-determined attributes; and

a seventh component to transmit a postage payment adjustment amount to the customer account based on a comparison between the first and second postage values.

50. The system of claim 49 wherein the first component is a network interface component to receive mailing information from the customer over a network.

51. The system of claim 50 wherein the first component is a network interface component to receive mailing information by the delivery system operator over the Internet.

52. The system of claim 49 wherein the customer-determined attributes include at least one of height, length, weight, thickness, and weight of the parcel.

53. The system of claim 52 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

54. The system of claim 49 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

55. The system of claim 49 further comprising an eighth component to store the mailing information.

56. The system of claim 49 wherein the customer account is a credit card account.

57. The system of claim 49 wherein the mailing label further comprises a unique identification code for the parcel.

58. The system of claim 49 wherein the fifth component comprises at least one of a weight component to weigh the parcel, a capture component to capture an image of the parcel, and a sensing component to sense physical dimensions of the parcel.

59. The system of claim 49 wherein the seventh component further comprises:

a requesting component to request additional payment when the second postage value is greater than the first postage value.

60. The system of claim 49 wherein the seventh component further comprises:

a generating component to generate a credit when the second postage value is less than the first postage value.

61. The system of claim 49 wherein the indication of the first postage value is at least one of a bar code, an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made, and a postage stamp.

62. The system of claim 49 wherein the parcel is at least one of the following: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

63. The system of claim 49 wherein the seventh component comprises a transmitting component to transmit data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.

64. A system for correcting a postage value, comprising:

- a first component to store a first postage value derived from customer-determined attributes of a parcel;
- a second component to receive payment for the first postage value;
- a third component to receive the parcel at a delivery-system operator;
- a fourth component to determine attributes of the parcel by the delivery system operator to generate a second postage value;
- a fifth component to compare the first and second postage values; and

if the first postage value is greater than the second postage value, providing a credit to the customer; and

if the second postage value is less than the first postage value, generating a charge to the customer.

65. A method for receiving payment for postage by a delivery system operator from a customer, comprising:

means for receiving from the customer mailing information for a parcel, the mailing information comprising customer-determined attributes of the parcel;

means for calculating a first postage value based on the customer-determined attributes;

means for transmitting data to the customer to permit printing by the customer of a mailing label for the parcel, the mailing label including an indication of the first postage value;

means for charging a customer account for the first postage value;

means for determining attributes of the parcel by the delivery system operator;

means for calculating a second postage value for the parcel based on the operator-determined attributes; and

means for transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount to the customer account based on a comparison between the first and second postage values.

66. The system of claim 65 wherein the means for receiving comprises means for receiving the mailing information from the customer over a network.

67. The system of claim 65 wherein the means for receiving comprises means for receiving the mailing information by the delivery system operator over the Internet.

68. The system of claim 65 wherein the customer-determined attributes comprise at least one of height, length, weight, thickness, and weight of the parcel.

69. The system of claim 68 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

70. The system of claim 65 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

71. The system of claim 65 further comprising means for storing the mailing information.

72. The system of claim 65 wherein the customer account is a credit card account.

73. The system of claim 65 wherein the mailing label further comprises a unique identification code for the parcel.

74. The system of claim 65 wherein the means for determining attributes by the delivery system operator comprises means for at least one of weighing the parcel, capturing an image of the parcel, and sensing physical dimensions of the parcel.

75. The system of claim 65 wherein the means for adjusting the payment further comprises:

means for requesting additional payment when the second postage value is greater than the first postage value.

76. The system of claim 65 wherein the means for adjusting the payment further comprises:

means for generating a credit when the second postage value is less than the first postage value.

77. The system of claim 65 wherein the indication of the first postage value is at least one of a bar code, an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made, and a postage stamp.

78. The system of claim 65 wherein the parcel is at least one of: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

79. The system of claim 65 wherein the means for transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount comprises means for transmitting data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.

80. The system for correcting a postage value, comprising:

means for storing a first postage value derived from customer-determined attributes of a parcel;

means for receiving payment for the first postage value;

means for receiving the parcel at a delivery-system operator;

means for determining attributes of the parcel by the delivery system operator to generate a second postage value; and

means for comparing the first and second postage values for providing a credit to the customer if the first postage value is greater than the second postage value and generating a charge to the customer if the second postage value is less than the first postage value.

81. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system to perform a method for receiving payment for postage by a delivery system operator from a customer, the method comprising the steps of:

calculating a first postage value based on customer-determined attributes contained in mailing information for a parcel received from the customer;

transmitting data to the customer to permit printing by the customer of a mailing label for the parcel, the mailing label including an indication of the first postage value;

charging a customer account for the first postage value;

calculating a second postage value for the parcel based on attributes of the parcel determined by the delivery system operator; and

transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount to the customer account based on a comparison between the first and second postage values.

82. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the mailing information is received from the customer over a network.

83. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the mailing information is received by the delivery system operator over the Internet.

84. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the customer-determined attributes include at least one of height, length, weight, thickness, and weight of the parcel.

85. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

86. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the mailing information comprises at least one of return address information, destination address information, and payment information.

87. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the customer account is a credit card account.

88. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the mailing label further comprises a unique identification code for the parcel.

89. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein obtaining actual attributes comprises at least one of weighing the parcel, capturing an image of the parcel, and sensing physical dimensions of the parcel.

90. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

requesting additional payment when the second postage value is greater than the first postage value.

91. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein adjusting the payment further comprises:

generating a credit when the second postage value is less than the first postage value.

92. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein the indication of the first postage value is at least one of a bar code, an image indicating an account from which delivery payment has been made, and a postage stamp.

93. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein in the parcel is at least one of the following: a mailpiece, a package, an oversized package, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, and a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package.

94. The computer-readable medium of claim 81 wherein transmitting a postage payment adjustment amount comprises transmitting data by at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.

95. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system to perform a method for correcting a postage value, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a first postage value derived from customer-determined attributes of a parcel;

receiving payment for the first postage value;
generating a second postage value based on attributes of the parcel
determined by the delivery system operator;
comparing the first and second postage values;
providing a credit to the customer if the first postage value is greater than
the second postage value; and
generating a charge to the customer if the second postage value is less
than the first postage value.

96. A system for correcting a postage value, comprising:
a memory having program instructions; and
a processor responsive to the program instructions to: store a first
postage value derived from customer-determined attributes of a parcel; receive
payment for the first postage value; generate a second postage value based on
attributes of the parcel determined by the delivery system operator; compare the
first and second postage values; provide a credit to the customer if the first
postage value is greater than the second postage value; and generate a charge
to the customer if the second postage value is less than the first postage value.